GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3553
ANSWERED ON:21.12.2015
Soil Fertility in Mining Areas
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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the quality of soil had deteriorated due to years of mining activity in mining areas and also the original top layer of the soil lost its fertility due to the continuous dumping of waste;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the corrective action taken by the Government in this regard; and
(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

(a): Yes Madam. The extraction of minerals closely impacts other natural resources like land, water, air and forest.

(b) and (c): Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR), 1988 framed under section 18 of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowers Central Government for the conservation and systematic development of minerals and for the protection of environment by preventing or controlling any pollution which may be caused by prospecting or mining operations. Rule 32 of the said Rules states that:

(i) Every holder of a prospecting licence or a mining lease shall, wherever top soil exists and is to be excavated for prospecting or mining operations, remove it separately.

(ii) The top soil so removed shall be utilised for restoration or rehabilitation of the land which is no longer required for prospecting or mining operations or for stabilising or landscaping the external dumps.

(iii) Whenever the top soil cannot be utilised concurrently, it shall be stored separately for future use.

Indian Bureau of Mines, a subordinate office of Ministry of Mines, carries out inspections for enforcement of MCDR, 1988 for scientific mining, systematic development of mines, conservation of Mineral and Environmental Protection. If any lessee/company is found violating such provisions, action as deemed necessary is initiated for compliance of the same.